

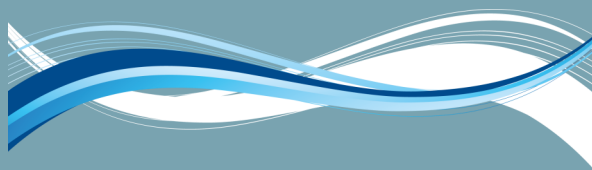


INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Staff Farewell	2
Bird Seed Sale Thank you	3
New Addition	4
Hunting Cabin Display	5
Evening Lecture Series	6
Bird Feeder Hygiene	7
Brush Piles for Habitat	8
Beavers at the Nature Center	9
FOMKNC Sign Project	10
Donors and Volunteers	11
Happy New Year!	12



The Nature Center Stream



Winter

The Seasonal Newsletter of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game MK Nature Center

2018



Beavers Make MKNC Home

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG

A beaver rescued from a window well near Cloverdale and Ustick in Boise was released at the nature center with the help of Animals in Distress, Idaho Fish and Game biologists, and the Nature Center's Susan Ziebarth. The original release of the beaver was slotted for evening, but it was apparent that being held in captivity was causing the animal distress, so it was released in the daytime (see photo on page 9). Coincidentally, a day prior to this event, a different beaver was photographed in the nature center pond and it is possible they are working together! It is unlikely you will see a beaver if you come visit, but you cannot miss the major remodel job they are performing on the beaver dam replica near the large pond. Also, they have created two dams along the creek and the plethora of beaver chewed trees and logs. More photos on page 9.



Our infrared trail camera is located in a perfect position to capture the beavers working on their shelter at night. From the photos, we know the beavers are working together. We have also captured photos of geese, ducks, and mink at the dam.

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Nature Center Notes

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor, IDFG



With the waning of the year I, like many of us, find myself taking stock of the year that has just passed. It's been a year full of large and small changes here at the nature center. Often, it is the big changes that we focus upon such as the new display, new office space and the beautiful new mosaic. They are most obvious, creating the greatest immediate and exciting change. However, it is often the smaller things that create lasting impressions--- snow delicately balancing on branches; beaver working to turn the nature center into a home; twin fawns tottering on new legs; visitors leaning over the bridge exclaiming at sight of a sturgeon; the busyness of bumblebees at summer flowers; the shriek of delight from children experiencing their first encounter with a crayfish. In all seasons, the nature center provides the chance to enjoy these small, yet amazing moments. Take some time to explore our winter landscape during its quietest season. You will not be disappointed at the small things you will find and the memories they create.

Happy Holidays to all our visitors and volunteers! We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you in 2018.



Donning his typical smile, Calvin holds a Chinook Salmon just before he divides it up to feed to the Nature Center's sturgeon. Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG.

Moving On

Calvin Woodland started working at the Nature Center as a BSU work study student on Feb. 29th 2016, and we quickly learned he was an awesome addition to our staff. He had a great eye for noticing things that needed to be done around the center and was really great with customers. Calvin's last day was September 14th, 2017. We are excited for him as he found a job at BSU in his area of study! A nicer guy you could not meet, we are going to really miss him!

Another goodbye we must say is to another MKNC employee who seems to have an endless smile, Curtis-Lake. Curtis-Lake has been working part-time with building and grounds maintenance since the fall of 2016. Curtis is an up-beat, friendly, and helpful face to see each time he works. He interacts well with our visitors, and has an insatiable interest for information about nature (which really helps making work fun around here). We wish him well with his new employment adventure.



Curtis-Lake Cloud holds George the gopher snake. Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG.

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Bird Seed Sale Success

PAGE 3

Sue Dudley, Gift Shop Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, IDFG

Thanks to all of the wonderful volunteers who came out to support our annual bird seed sale; it was another successful year. A special thanks to Wild Birds Unlimited, our event sponsors and our wonderful volunteers who help us put on this event.



Above: Idaho Master Naturalists Ron Lopez and Kevin Wilson prepare to haul seed. Upper left: Vicky Runnoe of IDFG, Boyd Steel from Wild Birds Unlimited and volunteers Susie Carlson and Jael Prin find their holiday cheer at the Bird Seed Sale. Donning a Santa hat, MKNC AmeriCorps Member Tess Wolfenson helps kids create a holiday ornament. Left: IDFG Vicky Runnoe presents Wilson, our female peregrine falcon to an interested crowd. Lower left: Jael Prin and Joseph Terry schlep seeds for the bird seed sale fund-raiser. Photos by Sue Dudley, IDFG.



Idaho Master Naturalists Christine Simon (top) and Suzanne Troje (bottom) help carry bird seed to customers' cars.

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New Addition

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG

The new addition with preliminary landscaping shown here to the right from the parking lot. Below is one of the three new offices...bright, clean and spacious! Photos by Sara Focht, IDFG.



Much needed office and storage space finally became a reality this past October with the completion of our 588 square foot Nature Center addition. Crews worked daily from mid-summer to the end of October. The three new offices moved Sara and Vicky, freeing up their former office for our 2018 AmeriCorps member and a nice volunteer check-in station as well as a more functional kitchen/sink area. It feels like a weight has been lifted, as the staff was able to organize and spread out a little. We appreciate the help of IDFG engineer Mike Maffey,

Wright Brothers (the Building Company), Glancey, Rockwell & Associates Architecture, and IDFG leadership, who made the addition a priority.



Let the building begin! Quite a bit of dirt and a few trees needed to be removed to start the addition. You can see from comparing these photos with the photo of the finished addition at the top that the architects and builders did a great job making the extension look like it has always been there!

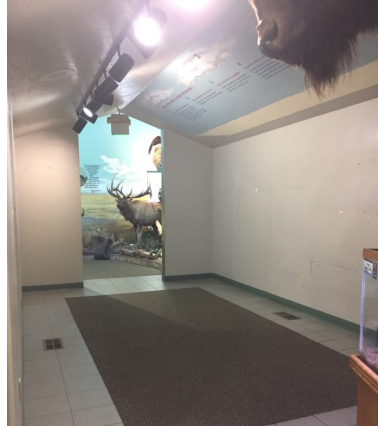
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Hunting Cabin Display Complete

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG



We used to call this room the Kids' Corner. This picture was taken before the work began.



The room sure looked bigger after everything was removed.



A log cabin façade was placed at the entrance to the room, making it hard to see the room from the same angle, but adding authenticity to the display.

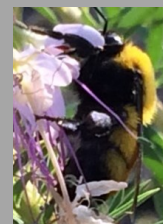


Welcome to our old time hunting cabin! The middle room at the Nature Center has been transformed into a beautiful replica of days gone by. It might actually be a little more spiffy than an actual old hunting cabin, but it contains some important similar elements. A fireplace and cooking area make the room cozy. Back lit “windows” allows visitors to see some of Idaho’s most beautiful landscapes. Furs, traps, and old hunting photos decorate the walls and buckets of furs, antlers, and horns can be touched and passed around by all.

Funding for this project was provided by Idaho Fish and Game’s Pittman Robertson Funds. “P-R” funds, as they are called come from an excise tax on hunting and trapping equipment, as well as ammunition. These federal funds are distributed to the states for wildlife management. Wildlife Educator, Adare Evans, designed the room, hired contractors, hunted for authentic decorations, and even made some of the props herself.

We hope you come enjoy our new display and immerse yourself in Idaho’s rich hunting heritage.

Spring Lectures at MK Nature Center



January 10th-Retired IDFG biologist John Beecham will share his vast experience with rehabilitating bears and other wildlife species around the world.

February 15th-Cori Coffman from the BLM will have live raptors to show! Come learn about raptor habitat at the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area...it is their 25th Anniversary! The NCA is a treasure trove of biological and recreational resources! Family Friendly!

March 19th-IDFG Biologist Ross Winton will share information about Idaho's bumblebees and citizen science opportunities available to help conserve them.

April 2nd- Listen up! Birding by ear. IDFG Conservation Education Supervisor, Vicky Runnoe will teach you how to identify common birds around Boise just by sound.

May 7th-Idaho Fish and Game Botanist, Lynn Kinter will teach us about showy wildflowers and other native and non-native plants in the Boise Foothills.

Everyone is welcome, but lectures are designed for adults unless otherwise noted. Lectures are free and open to the public. All lectures are 6:30-8 pm. MK Nature Center 600 S. Walnut Street, Boise, ID 86712 (208) 334-2225



Idaho Master Naturalist Chapter Enrollment Open

Sara Focht, Wildlife Educator, IDFG

The 10th class of the Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalist Program will begin February 27th, 2018. Enrollment is now open <https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/sites/Wildlife/IDMasterNaturalist/Boise/Master%20Naturalist%20Brochure/2018.Idaho%20Master%20Naturalist%20Enrollment%20Form.pdf>.

The chapter is sponsored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game MK Nature Center, the Idaho Botanical Garden and the City of Boise. Participants attend 40 hours of classes and donate 40 hours of volunteer time in a calendar year for certification. This chapter focuses on Conservation Education volunteer activities, but there are diverse volunteer opportunities offered. Contact Sara Focht if you have questions about the online description and enrollment form (see link above).

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Bird Feeder Blues

Tess Wolfenson, AmeriCorps Member, IDFG MKNC

With winter approaching, bird feeder hygiene is a topic that comes up quite often at the Nature Center. Without the proper care, bird feeders can create the perfect breeding ground for diseases that could be fatal to many bird species. Here is an overview of a few bird diseases made worse by feeder crowding or dirty feeders.

Salmonellosis-birds lose weight, get diarrhea, and are lethargic.

Trichomoniasis (pigeons and doves) -birds develop sores on their mouths and throats making it difficult to swallow. Due to their inability to properly swallow, infected birds may drop food or water and other birds could consume that contaminated food or water, spreading disease.

Bronchitis or pneumonia-caused by aspergillus fungus which is a type of mold that can grow on damp feed and debris that gathers beneath feeders. Birds inhale the spores and get sick.

Avian pox- causes growths on infected bird's faces, wings, legs, and feet or any other featherless surface causes issues with their vision, ability to eat or stand properly on perches.

You can successfully feed birds this winter and protect them from common diseases by three rules: SPACE, SANITIZE, SWEEP

SPACE

If your feeders are crowded and birds are knocking each other over to get to food, get another feeder and spread out the distance between the feeders. This gets birds away from each other and reduces stress.



Red-breasted nuthatches commonly visit feeders in the winter. Photo by [Jim Bauer](#), CC BY-NC-ND from Flickr.

SANITIZE

Wash feeders weekly with soap and water, bleach and rinse. Dry completely before restocking.

Discard any food that is wet, smells odd or has visible mold.

Clean water sources daily.



For more information about bird diseases, how to prevent them and pictures of disease symptoms, visit The Cornell Lab's Project Feeder Watch website: <https://feederwatch.org/learn/sick-birds-and-bird-diseases>.

SWEEP

Sweep, rake or scoop debris under bird feeders. Dropped shells, seeds, and feces propel the spread of diseases.

Placing a board or hard surface under your feeder makes sweeping easy.



Create a Brush Pile in Your Yard this Winter

Tess Wolfenson, AmeriCorps Member, IDFG MKNC

If you are looking for ways to attract and help wildlife in the winter, building a small brush pile in your yard might do the trick. Brush piles are an important habitat for many species and can provide shelter from harsh weather and protection from predators. Some animals use the top layer of the pile, while others find refuge inside the pile. Even the soil under the pile can provide something needed by insects, worms, and other invertebrates.

The first visitors you will see on the brush pile will include quail, spotted towhees, dark-eyed juncos, white-crowned sparrows, house wrens and other birds. They will be searching around for food and nesting materials found in the pile.

If you are concerned about ants or rodents in your home, consider the location of your brush pile before placing it right next to your home or other buildings on the property. Locate places where you have noticed animals in your yard naturally congregating or on a travel corridor where you frequently see animals scampering. Along a fence, near trees or bushes or near other bird feeders are good places to ensure the brush pile gets used. Placing brush piles in the middle of a yard or in an isolated place makes it less likely to be used.

Start with large rocks or tree branches at the bottom and add smaller debris to the top....how about that dried up Christmas tree? Make sure there is adequate space throughout the pile to provide shelter for smaller animals and do not pack the material down too tightly. In the spring, you can add materials from yard pruning to the pile to create a year-round habitat.

Brush piles will help animals find what they need, give you a way to discard yard waste, and provide a great place for wildlife viewing!



California quail prefer to be near cover when foraging on the ground. Photo by USFWS Pacific Region from Flickr. CC BY-NC 2.0



Brushpiles do not need to be this large to be effective. Photo by Brian Henderson from Flickr. Brush pile (Avondale) CC BY-NC 2.0



Beavers Call MKNC Home

PAGE 9

Photos from cover story



The infrared trail camera captured this picture of two beavers working together.



Here is the beaver swimming in the pond just after release. Photo by Susan Ziebarth, IDFG.



This close up view of the Nature Center's human-constructed beaver dam shows where the real beavers have been at work! The entire left half of the dam has been re-worked and added onto. Below: just one of MANY beaver chewed sticks found at the Nature Center. Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG.



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Interpretive Signs Underway

Friends of MK Nature Center Board



Artist and designer, Stephanie Inman is working on MKNC interpretive signs. Stephanie has very interesting projects she has completed. Take time to visit her website at StephanieInman.com. Photo courtesy Brooke Burton.

Friends of MK Nature Center (FOMKNC) has recently embarked upon a major upgrade of the interpretive and entrance signs throughout the MK Nature Center, and is very excited to be working on this very important educational tool. These new signs will replace the old signs that have worn, degraded and have fallen apart.

To this end, FOMKNC has hired Stephanie Inman, local artist and designer to design and illustrate the signs. Trademark Creative has also been hired to do the sign bases, manage fabrication and installation.

“Stephanie has been a joy to work with,” says IDFG Wildlife Educator, Sara Focht. “She creates colorful, and captivating work and is receptive to technical and design revisions. These new signs are going to be lovely and educational-a big upgrade!” Focht adds.

Vicky Runnoe and Sara Focht (IDFG) came up with the sign subjects and themes. Vicky did the preliminary writing. With the text and a few ideas and explanations, Stephanie worked up some drafts.

Through Idaho Gives (annual giving day in May), membership dues, grants (Morrison Knudsen Foundation, Harry W. Morrison Foundation and the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation), the FOMKNC

has been able to raise most of the money for this interpretive sign project, but still needs financial support. If you would like to donate to the FOMKNC, visit the website <http://www.friendsofmknc.org> for online donating or a physical address to which the donation can be sent. Your support will help put these new signs on the ground in 2018.



A sneak peak at a cute corner of one of Stephanie's signs for the Nature Center. She mixes clear photos with graphic color patterns, creating a rich and exciting visual effect. Graphic provided by Stephanie Inman.



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Donors and Volunteers

PAGE 11

Supporters listed here donated directly to the MK Nature Center between October 1 and December 31, 2017. Donations come in the form of money, goods, services, or other in-kind donations. Donors to Friends of MKNC are not listed.

Kris Cowart

Mark and Jody Meier

A-Mark Foundation

Sharon & Russ Kiefer

Randy Budge
Janet Lee &
Marlin H. Glasner

Richardson's Family

Hilda Packard

Joseph T. Davis Jr. & Mary

Margret Davis

Rocky Canyon Sailtoads

The following people volunteered their time to the MK Nature Center between October 1 and December 31st, 2017. Thank you!

Ron Andrew
KayLynn Broadhead
Margit Donhowe
Seth Davis
Eric Guise
Janna Gray
Sonya Janson
Carolyn Larson
Bronwyn Myers
Cheryl Minckler

Damon Noller
Hannah Max
Tom Neale
Emily Rigg
Celia Renner
Valerie Ray
Susan Riley
Arleen Schaeffer
Marylee Hale
Steven K. Berg

Patti Gregor
Ron Lopez
Jerry Pugh
Joseph Terry
Jael Prin
Susie Carlson
Kevin Wilson
Crikky Simon
Suzanne Troje



A skiff of snow on the evening of December 15th brought evidence of animal pathways all around the Nature Center grounds. These beautiful raccoon tracks were found in back of the new addition. Photo by Sara Focht, IDFG.



While guiding children to the fish viewing windows during our Animals in Winter program, we found a huge bullfrog clinging to a tree stump underwater (left). It was a little embarrassing, as we had just explained that the turtles and frogs would all be hibernating! Above right, the trout in the viewing windows seem to not notice that winter has arrived. Photos by Sara Focht, IDFG.



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BK Helps MK



Bonane Kanyamahanga has been coming to the Nature Center every weekday for 1.25 hours this past semester! BK, as we call him, washes windows, sweeps the path, and does other routine, but important grounds maintenance jobs. BK is a senior at Timberline High School and was placed at the Nature Center as part of the Community Based Education Training (CBET) Program. BK has been a quiet, pleasant, and consistent presence at the Nature Center this fall. We appreciate his work and dedication and wish him the best in the future!

A New Year

Happy Holidays from the staff at the Idaho Fish and Game MK Nature Center. Come see the ducks, sturgeon, beaver work, the towering cottonwood trees, or the great blue heron. Listen to the songbirds, rippling water, or crunching snow under your boots. Smell the fresh dirt, flowers blooming, or the scent of fresh water. Bring your kids or grandkids. Bring a date, or just take a moment to be by yourself. We hope you make MK Nature Center part of your 2018.



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